



# Part 24: Who's Your Daddy?

Word ALIVE



The Prodigal Son



## Background Notes -

**PURPOSE:** To present more of Jesus' teachings en route to Jerusalem, addressing the importance of being childlike.

**AUTHOR:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the Evangelists.

**DATE:** Possibly towards the Passover of the year 29 or 30.

**STYLE:** Again Luke saves the journey towards Jerusalem as the framework for his set of Jesus' teachings not found in the other Gospels. Contrasting the hypocritical religion of the Pharisees, Christ's teachings here are for the most part parables, though many of his teachings are reflections on real life examples in the people around him.



## Opening Quotes -

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” Lk 15:21

“The master commended the dishonest steward for his prudence; for the sons of this world are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light.” Lk 16:8

“The Law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it violently.” Lk 16:16

“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.” Lk 17:17

“I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken, the other left.” Lk 17:34

“I tell you, [God] will vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night. When the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?” Lk 18:7

“Let the children come to me; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” Mt 19:14

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Mt 19:24

“To everyone who has, more will be given; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” Lk 19:26

the BIG PICTURE		LAW, History, Writings, Prophets		key covenants in our Father's plan
12 Periods	Plot	Other books related to period		stories in each period
BC	THE BEGINNINGS	GN 1-11	Ps 8, 104	Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah's ark, Tower of Babel
1850	THE PATRIARCHS	GN 12-50		Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Melchizedek
1250	EXODUS FROM EGYPT	EX		Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, passover, exodus
1200	JOURNEY TO CANAAN	NM, Jos	LV, DT	Sinai desert, 10 commandments, Levites, Law, Joshua
1100	THE JUDGE CYCLE	Jg	Ruth	12 tribes, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel
1030	KINGS & PROPHETS	1 & 2 S	1 Ch, Ps, Prov	Saul, David, Solomon, Jerusalem, the Temple
1000	THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	1 Kg	2 Ch, Prov,	Israel (N), Judah (S), Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Assyrian exile
721 587	BABYLONIAN EXILE	2 Kg	2 Ch, Tob, Hos, Am, Hab, Is, Jer, Lam, Jl, Mic, Zp, Jon, Nah, Ob, Ez, Dan, Bar	Babylonians, "major" prophets, Isaiah (to Israel), Jeremiah (to Jerusalem), Ezekiel (to the Exiles)
538	THE RESTORATION	Ezr, Neh	Est, Judith, Hag, Zech, Mal, Job, Ecc, Songs	Cyrus, 2nd temple, 2nd Law, "minor" prophets, new writings
163 63	THE REPURIFICATION	1 Mac	Dn, 2Mac, Sirach, Wisdom	Greeks, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean Dynasty, Romans, Jewish sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Zealots, Essenes)
AD	JESUS CHRIST	LK	MT, MK, JN	Incarnation, Good News, New Law, Cross & Resurrection
33 70	APOSTOLIC CHURCH	Acts	Rm, 1&2Co, Ga, Ep, Phil, Col, 1&2Th, 1&2 Tm, Ti, Phm, Hb, Ja, 1P, 2P, 1,2&3J, Jd, Rv	Pentecost, council, journeys, epistles, Body/Bride of Christ



## The Story of Part 24: Who's Your Daddy?



When the Pharisees scoffed at Jesus for hanging with sinners, he told them that the angels rejoice more over one repentant sinner than over 99 who don't need repentance, and then told his most famous parable. Last time the parable of the Good Samaritan answered the question "Who's your neighbor?" Now the parable of the Prodigal Son would answer the question "Who is God?" with the answer, "A Father longing for your return":

One day after squandering his inheritance on loose living, reduced to eating with pigs, a repentant son decided to humbly return to his father as a servant, no longer worthy to be called his son. But the father, seeing his returning son in the distance, ran out to meet him, through his arms around him, kissed him, adorned him, and threw a great feast for him! When the older brother complained about this, the father told him "You are always with me, but rejoice with me, for your brother was lost and is found!" This parable not only told the Pharisees that the righteous should rejoice for the repentant sinners that would return to God (even Gentiles), but even more, that the love of God for us is the love of a father who rushes out to greet us and kiss us. Only the childlike will enter heaven.

Jesus then told a parable of a manager about to get fired for mismanaging his master's property. The manager told whoever owed his master money that they only had to pay half of their debt, to get on their good side after he was fired. Even though he was cheating his master, the master commended him for his shrewdness! Jesus was suggesting that we need this kind of shrewd thinking even to do good, and was indirectly criticizing the thought that since prosperity was a gift from God, more wealth meant more righteousness. For when God's material gifts become more important than God, they become an idol, and no man can serve two masters.

The Pharisees thought he was tampering with the Law, but he clarified that not even one dot of the Law would be changed. He came not to abolish the Law, but to perfect it, and this was not going to be a softening by any means. For example, his forbiddance of divorce (which Moses had permitted in some cases for the protection of the woman), was a return to God's original intention of making marriage absolutely indissoluble.

He then told a parable about a rich man who ends up in hell, looking up at Lazarus in heaven, a poor man he neglected on earth. Begging for Lazarus to relieve him from his sufferings, he is told that there is an uncrossable abyss fixed between them. He then begs to have his living brothers warned of this dreadful place, but is told that if they did not heed Moses and the prophets, they would not even believe someone raised from the dead! Notice that the rich man begs for mercy from his sufferings, not for forgiveness of his sins, teaching us that hell is not an unjust punishment, but the eternal consequence fated for the heart that will not change.

Jesus told the Pharisees they were not heeding God's signs (the prophets), but there would be no mistaking a time when he would return with the fury of Noah's flood, a time when many would be left behind, thinking themselves self-sufficient. The kingdom would be completed in the future but established *in their generation*.

Jesus then taught the two types of prayer that are heard. First, he taught the effectiveness of *persistence* with the parable of a judge who gave in to a widow's pleas just to stop her nagging! A lived example was a blind man who kept yelling "Son of David, have mercy on me!" and received his sight for his persistent faith. Then, to illustrate the *humility* of prayer, he contrasted a Pharisee whose prayer consisted of thanking God for making him so righteous, with the humble prayer of a tax collector ashamed of his sin, begging for God's mercy. He dismissed the Pharisees' idea that we had any right to boast for doing our duty to God, as if we were doing him a favor!

One day a rich young man missed a higher call when he approached Jesus, telling him that he had kept all the commandments. "Then go and sell your riches and come follow me," Jesus told him. The rich man went away sad, for he was attached to his riches. What an apostle he would have made! In contrast, a rich tax collector, Zacchaeus, climbed a tree to get a closer look at Jesus. Jesus saw his faith, dined with him (to the chagrin of the Pharisees), and commended him when he gave away half of his belongings to the poor.

Then, to show the richness of heaven, Jesus told the story of a man who hired workers throughout the day to tend his field. At the end of the day, he payed each a full day's wage, even though some hired later than others. When the ones who worked earlier complained, the owner said quite frankly, "Is it not mine to do what I want with my money? I have not wronged you." Thus Jesus was teaching God's justice and his great generosity, which cannot be outdone.

One day the mother of two of the apostles, James and John, asked Jesus if her sons could sit at either side of him in heaven. "You don't know what you're asking!" He responded. The greatest in heaven, he said, would be the one who serves. "The Son of man came not to be served but to serve."

Finally, en route to Jerusalem, he implied what he expected of his true followers with the parable of a man who became king and gave three servants money. When he heard that two of the servants invested the money and made more, he commended them. But when the third servant hid the money out of fear, the king had the money taken away from him and given to the first man. And so, God expects us to be good stewards of the gifts he gives us as his loyal subjects.

With that, he journeyed on to Jerusalem. 📖



## Defending the Faith: The childishness of religion

"Religion is for kids."

Religion is for kids. True enough. Then again, so is having fun. And obeying parents. And being punished when we do something wrong. The fact is we are all kids. There are no grown ups. They say that those who dabble in philosophy become atheists, but those who really sink their teeth into it become believers. Likewise, those who are grown up give up childish ways, and those who are truly grown up become like children again, yearning for their Father in heaven.

When we see God as our Father, so many things which seem theologically complicated become easier to understand. Why does God let us suffer? The same reason parents who love their children let them suffer: to learn and to become stronger (see Rom 5:3). Does God reward us in heaven? Just like parents reward their children (see Lk 6:35). Does God stop loving us when we sin? No more than a loving parent stops loving their child (see Lk 15:20). Do we understand everything about God? No, and neither does the frustrated child who has to hear his parents say "Because I say so," or "One day when you're older you'll understand." (See 1 Cor 13:12).

But one of the biggest reasons we need to know that we are children is the flipside of the suffering that the cross brings: the *joy* of being like Christ. Yes, we are to carry a cross, but we crucify ourselves, (figuratively speaking) because we believe in the resurrection (literally speaking), and this brings us great joy (see 1P 4:13). "Don't worry," says St. Josemaria Escriva, "if you think of the reward once in awhile!"

Too many have become jaded with life, seeing, like Ecclesiastes, the boring repetitiveness of daily events. But behold, God makes all things new (Rev 21:5)! In his book *Orthodoxy*, G.K. Chesterton exposes this childlike secret of our God:

"The thing I mean can be seen in children, when they find some game or joke that they especially enjoy. A child kicks his legs rhythmically through excess, not absence, of life. Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say 'Do it again'; and the grown-up does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, 'Do it again' to the sun; and every evening, 'Do it again' to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we."

And so, we cry *Abba*, Father, Daddy, when we call out to our God. We are all God's creatures, created in his image. But when we repent of our sinfulness, we truly become adopted children of God, and like the Prodigal Son, we see our loving Father with arms wide open, dying through his Son, literally dying to see us come home again.



## Expressing the Faith: Faith Like a Child

Jars of Clay sing of the healing and joy that come with following Jesus, becoming a child of God.

*Dear God, surround me as I speak  
The bridges that I walk across are weak  
Frustrations will fill the void that I can't solely bear  
Dear God, don't let me fall apart  
You've held me close to you  
I have turned away and searched for answers  
I can't understand*

*They say that I can move the mountains  
And send them falling to the sea  
They say that I can walk on water  
If I would follow and believe  
With faith like a child*

*Sometimes, when I feel miles away  
And my eyes can't see your face  
I wonder if I've grown to lose  
the recklessness I walked in light of you  
(chorus)*

*(chorus)  
They say that love can heal the broken  
They say that hope can make you see  
They say that faith can find a Savior  
If you would follow and believe  
With faith like a child*

↗ **Next time: "The Way, The Truth, The Life"** ↖